



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 20-3744, **Agenda Item #:** 43.

12/10/2020

### Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of an interlocal agreement with the University of Texas at Austin-Dell Medical School to conduct two studies regarding (1) the impact of COVID-19 on individuals with severe mental illness, and (2) the longevity of COVID-19 antibody responses in the Austin population, for a term from December 14, 2020 through August 30, 2022, in an amount not to exceed \$939,022.

### Lead Department

Austin Public Health.

### Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$939,022 is included in the COVID-19 Spending Framework (Resolution No. 20200507-060).

### Prior Council Action:

June 11, 2020 - Council approved the negotiation and execution of an agreement with the University of Texas at Austin - Dell Medical School to conduct a study of the seroprevalence of SARS-CoV-2, beginning on August 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022 in an amount not to exceed \$1,449,999.03. This agreement was not able to be negotiated prior to the end of the fiscal year and funds were never encumbered. This new agreement contains a seroprevalence study as well as an additional study examining the rates and consequences of COVID-19 on individuals with severe mental illness.

### For More Information:

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### Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

### Additional Backup Information:

University of Texas at Austin's Dell Medical School will complete two separate studies on the impact of COVID-19 on: (1) the rates and consequences of COVID-19 in people with severe mental illness, and (2) the longevity of COVID-19 antibody responses in the Austin population.

SARS-CoV-2 emerged in December 2019 as a highly contagious virus spreading across the world and has now infected over 59 million individuals globally. Although Austin has had relatively fewer cases compared to other United States metropolitan areas, current and future surges in infection rates threaten to overwhelm hospitals and lead to higher mortality rates, particularly for marginalized communities.

These two studies will help to inform current and future policy decisions in Austin by providing much needed research into the longevity of serologic responses to COVID-19 by different disease severities and by examining the impact of COVID-19 on individuals with diagnosed severe mental illnesses to determine how the pandemic has impacted their psychiatric symptoms. This will allow policy makers to better understand where and how to prioritize resources to improve the health of Austin residents as individuals and the

community as a whole

**Strategic Outcome(s):**

Health and Environment.